

Light in Darkneſs,  
O R  
DELIVERANCE

Proclaimed unto the  
C H U R C H  
IN THE  
Midſt of all her Deſpondencies  
and Diſcouragements.

IN  
A S E R M O N

Preached by  
*THOMAS WATSON.*

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Light in Darkness

DELIVERANCE

CHURCH

Wicks of all her responsibilities

A SERMON

THOMAS WATSON

1700

1700



to the Light in Darkness, &c.

Psalm. 112. v. 4.

*Unto the Upright there ariseth Light in the Darkness.*

**T**HE Scripture (as Chrysostome says) is a Spiritual Paradise. The Book of Psalms is placed in the midst of this Paradise.

The Psalms are not only for Delight, but for Use : like those Trees of the Sanctuary in Ezekiel, which were both for Food, and for Medicine.

The Psalms of David are commensurate and exactly fitted to every Christians condition ; If his Affections are frozen, here he may fetch Fire ; if his Grace be weak, here he may fetch Armour ; If his Spirits are ready to faint, here he may fetch Cordials for his Soul : Amongst other Divine Consolations, the Text is not the least,---

*Unto*

Unto the Upright there ariseth Light in the Dark-  
ness.

Which words are calculated for the Comfort of the Godly, in all Ages and Centuries of the Church.

This Text is like *Israel's Pillar of Fire* in the *Wilderness* : or, like the *Mariners Lanthorn*, that gives Light in a *Dark Night*.

Unto the Upright there ariseth Light in the Dark-  
ness.

Let me Explain the Words e're I come to the Proposition.

1. To the Upright. ] Who are here meant by the Upright?

The *Hebrew* word for Upright, signifies Plain-  
ness of Heart. The Upright Man is without Colli-  
sion or Fraud; In whose Spirit there is no Guile;  
Psal. 32. 2. He that is Upright, his Heart and  
his Tongue go together, as a well-made Dial, goes  
exactly by the Sun.

The Words following in the Text, may serve  
for a short Paraphrase to shew us, who this Upright  
Man is, the Text sayes.

He



He is { Gracious,  
Full of Compassion,  
Righteous.

*First, The Upright Man is Gracious: That implies his Holiness.*

*Secondly, He is Full of Compassion: That implies his Charitableness. And,*

*Thirdly, He is Righteous: That implies his Justness.*

*He is Gracious, therefore he fears God.*

*He is Full of Compassion, therefore he feeds the Poor.*

*He is Righteous, therefore he does to others as he would have them do to him.*

*This is the Upright Man.*

*In short; He is one that does act from a right Principle, and that is Faith: By a right Rule, and that is Scripture: To a right End, and that is, God's glory. Here's a man downright Upright.*

2. The second thing in the Text is, There ariseth [ *Light* ] to the Upright. What's meant by *Light* here?

By *Light* metaphorically is meant *Delight* and *Comfort*, or *Joy*. That's here meant by *Light*.

Esther

Esther 8. 16. The Jews had Light, and Gladness, and Joy. Light, when it springs in, doth much revive. Light is sweet. Joy is to the Heart, as Light is to the Eye, Exhilarating and Refreshing. That's the second Word: There ariseth [Light] that is, Joy and Comfort.

3. There ariseth Light in [Darkness] What's meant here by Darkness?

By Darkness is meant Trouble and Sorrow, Res adverse. In Isa. 8. 22. They shall look unto the Earth, and behold Trouble, and Darkness. By Darkness is meant Trouble. Darkness is very Disconsolate and Afrighting: It makes every thing like the Terrors of the Night; Such is Trouble; Such is Affliction; 'tis Afrighting: It makes every thing like the Terrours of the Night.

So much for the Explaining of the Words:

To the Upright ariseth Light in the Darkness.

The Observation that results from the Words is this; (Pray observe it:)

Doct. That when the Condition of God's People is Darkest, God causes a Light to shine unto them. To the Upright ariseth Light in Darkness.

This

This Proposition has two Branches; I shall speak of them distinctly.

1. That the *Upright* may have their *Night* : it may be a *Dark* season.

2. That a *Morning-light* arises to them in the midst of all their *Darkness*.

First,

That the *Upright*, those whom God loves, they may have their *Night*, they may have a very *Dark* season : They may have a two-fold *Night*.

They may have { 1. A Night of *Affliction*.  
2. A Night of *Desertion*.

1. They may have a Night of *Affliction* : ( for Godliness does not exempt from Trouble.) A *Dark Cloud* may set upon their *Name*, upon their *Estate* : God may lay an *Embargo* upon all their *Outward Comforts*. In *Ruth* 1. 20. Call me not *Naomi* ( that is, *Fair*, or *Pleasant* : ) call me *Mara* : For the *Almighty* hath dealt very [bitterly] with me.

B

2. The

2. The Godly may have not only a *Night of Affliction*, but they may have a *Night of Desertion*. God may with-draw the smiling Beams of his *Favour*, and then 'tis *Night* with them indeed, then nothing follows but *Darkness*. In *Job 6. 4.* *The Arrows of the Almighty are within me, the poison whereof drinketh up my Spirit.*

It alludes (saies *Drusius*) unto the Custom of the *Persians*, who in their Warrs did dip their Arrows in Poison, that they might shoot their Enemies with the more deadly Wound. Thus the God of Heaven, he may sometimes shoot the poisoned Arrow of *Desertion*, and then the Soul is *Benighted*, it is in the *Dark*.

Though God has the *Heart* of a *Father*, yet he may sometimes have the *Face* of an *Enemy*.

And, the Lord may cause a *Cloud of Darkness* upon the Soul, and suspend the Beams of *Spiritual Comfort*, for these two Reasons.

#### Reason 1.

The *Darkness of Desertion*, it is, to quicken the exercise of *Grace*.

For *Grace* sometimes acts highest, when *Comfort* is lowest. In *Jonah 2. 4.* *I said I am cast out*  
of

of thy sight, yet will I look again towards thy Holy Temple. That is, I will look to Christ, of whom the Temple was but a Type.

Faith and Patience, like two Stars, shine brightest in a dark Night of Desertion. We are taken with the Comforts, but God is more taken with the Actings of our Grace.

### Reason 2.

The Lord may cause a Dark Cloud to be upon the Righteous, a Cloud of Desertion, That he may hereby awaken, excite, and stir up in them a Spirit of Prayer.

If ever the Soul will pray to purpose, 'tis now, in an hour of Desertion. Fathers may hide their Faces from their Children, to make them cry after them the more; God sometimes hides the light of his Face, that we may cry after him the louder: As David, in Psal. 143. 7. Hear me speedily, O Lord, my Spirit faileth: O! hide not thy face from me. My Beloved, Desertion; it is a short Hell. Jonah called the Whales belly, the belly of Hell; Why so? Because he was Deserted there. And if ever Jonah would Pray to purpose, it was now, that he might get out of the belly of Hell. Jonah 2. 2. Out of the belly of Hell I cryed unto thee, and thou heardest my voice.

And that's the first Branch of the Doctrine, That God's People, they may have a dark Night: A Night of Affliction, when God lays an Embargo upon all their Comforts: And a Night of Desertion, which is a short Hell.

Secondly, The second Branch of the Proposition is this, That now a Morning Light shines upon the Righteous. ---- Unto the Upright there ariseth Light in the Darknes. *Lux. oritur*, A Morning Light shines. The Philosopher says, *Non dantur puræ tenebræ*. When 'tis Darkest, when there's Midnight, God will cause Light some way or other, to break forth to the Upright in Heart. In Psal. 18. 28. The Lord will light my Candle. As if David had said, Though at present all my Comforts seem to be blown out, and I am left in the dark, yet the Lord will light my Candle: he will make Light to arise in Obscurity.

A two-  
fold  
Light a-  
rising to  
the Up-  
right.

There is a twofold Light that God causes to arise upon the Upright when they are in the dark.

There is	{	1. An Outward Light	} that he makes to shine.
		2. An Inward Light	

1. There

1. There is an *Outward Light* shines ; that is, God does oftentimes cause a *Light of Prosperity* to arise upon his People : that's a *Light in Darknes*. When God by his Providence alters the Face of things, and causes *Peace* and *Prosperity* in the Tabernacles of the Righteous, here's *Light* arising in *Darknes*. In Psal. 29. 3. *When his Candle shined upon my Head.* --- What was this *Candle*? It was nothing else but the *Candle of Prosperity* that shined upon him. And in Psal. 132. 17. *I have ordained a Lamp for mine Anointed* : That is, *Outward Blessings*, *Gracious Prosperity*, shall shine as a *Lamp* upon *David's Successor*. *I have ordained a Lamp for mine Anointed* ; I will give *outward Glory* in the Kingdom ; Here's an *outward Light*. The Lord can on a sudden alter the Scene of Providence, and turn the *shadow of Death*, into the *Light of the Morning*.

2. God causes an *Inward Light* to arise upon the Upright, when they are in the dark, ---

{ 1. A *Light of Grace*.

{ 2. A *Light of Joy*.

*First,*

First, The Light of Grace, he makes that shine. In the midst of *Darkness*, let the *Darkness* be what it will, a dram of *Faith* in the Soul, is a spark of *Light*. When the Tree has no *Leaves* nor *Blossoms* to be seen, but seems dead in *Autumn*, yet there may be sap in the Root of the Vine: When our *Outward Comforts* are as it were dead, there may be a *Seed of Grace* preserved in the *Heart*: and this *Grace* in the darkest condition, it is the dawning of *Light* in the Soul.

Secondly, God causes a *Light of Spiritual Joy and Comfort* to arise upon his Saints. And truly, this *Light of Spiritual Joy*, it is somewhat of the glimmering of the *Light of Heaven*, this is some glimpse of the *Light of Paradise*. In Isa. 12. 1. ----- *Thine Anger is turned away, and thou comfortedst me.* The *Light of Divine Joy* in the Soul, it is sweet and ravishing: it makes all dark *Shadows* flee away. *Spiritual Joy*, causes a *Jubilation*, and does as far exceed all *earthly Comforts*, as *Heaven* does *Earth*.

Thus



Thus you see, that in *Midnight*, in the darkest *Cloud* of Providence, God causes some *Light* or other to arise upon the *Upright*.

My Brethren, 'tis only God can make it *lightsome* in a dark troubled Soul. As when the Sun is set, none can make it rise again but God: So, (My Beloved,) when 'tis *Sun-set* in the Soul, and the Dew of Tears fall from the Eye, none can make *Day-light* in the Soul but only God. Ministers they may *Preach* Comfort to us, but God only can make us *feel* Comfort; Ministers they may bring a Cordial to us, and set it by us, but none but God can pour this Cordial into the *Heart*; in *Psal. 4. 7. Thou hast put Gladness in my Heart.*

Before I come to the Application, here's a Question arises, ----

Why does God make *Light* to arise to his People, in an hour of *Darkness*?

I answer: for three Reasons, ----

1. That God may hereby fulfil his Promise: He has said it, that he will enlighten his People. In *Isa.*

Reasons  
of the  
Point.

Isa. 42. 16. *I will make Darkness Light before them.* God's *Honour* lies upon it, to make good his *Promise*, and to cause *Light* to arise to his *People* in *Obscurity*. The Lord's *Promise*, it is his *Bond*. When one has given *Bond* to another, he cannot go back. Though sometimes God's *Promise* may be long in *Travail*, yet at last it brings forth *Deliverance*.

Two things in God never fail, ---

First, His *Compassions* fail not, *Lam.* 3. 22.

Secondly, His *Faithfulness* fails not, *Psal.* 82. 33. God may sometimes *delay* a *Promise*, but he will not *deny* his *Promise*: God may sometimes *change* his *Promise*, turn a *Temporal Promise* into a *Spiritual*, and so pay us in a *better Coin*, but will never *break* his *Promise*. He has said he will cause a *Light* to go before his *People* in all their *Darkness*.

2. God may cause *Light* and *Joy* to arise to his *People*, because they help to enlighten others. When other *Christians* are in the dark of *Ignorance*, they enlighten them with *Knowledge*; when they are in the dark of *Affliction*, ready to *perish*, they feed them, and they *relieve* them, and their *Almes* minister

minister *Light of Joy and Comfort* to the Poor; when they are in *Desertion*, why God's People, they speak a word of *Comfort* to their Hearts: They *enlighten* those that sit in *Darkness*, and therefore surely God will not let those want *Light*, who help to *enlighten* others; if they should come to be *benighted* with *Sorrow*, why God will be sure to spring in with some *Light* to them, who have given *Light* to others.

3. God will cause *Light* to arise in *Darkness* to his People, either he will support them in *Trouble*, or deliver them out of *Trouble*, because God sees that they have great need of some dawns of *Light*, they need some *Morning-Star* now to appear; they would faint away, they would be discouraged in serving God, if sometimes he did not turn the *Shadow of Death* into the *Light of the Morning*. Should the sick Patient always have purging Physick given him, why surely if he had no *Cordials* he would soon faint away. God knows our frame, he sees our *Spirits* would fail before him, if he did always let a dark *Cloud* dwell upon us; and  
C there-

therefore, in Judgment he remembers Mercy, and causes the Day-Star of Comfort and Joy to spring up in a Gracious Soul. God will not suffer it always to be dark in the Hearts of his People; lest they should touch upon the Rock of Despair. The Musician, he will not stretch the Strings of his Viol too hard, lest they should chance to break.

Thus you see why the wise God sees it fittest to cause *Light* to arise unto his People, in the midst of all their *Clouds of Darkneß*.

And so much briefly for the Doctrinal part.

I proceed now to the Application :

- { 1. By way of Information.
- { 2. By way of Consolation.

1. Use of Information.

First, By way of Information; Here are several Inferences. --

1. In-

*Inference 1.*

1. See from this Text, the *Infinite Goodness* of God to his Children in all cases that may fall out in this World, whether *Affliction* or *Desertion*. O the goodness of God ! in the midst of darkness he causes some Light or other to break forth. God does checker his work of Providence ; with dark *Clouds* he intermixes bright *Stars*. Just like the Limner who mingles with dark and black Colours, bright Colours ; thus does God in his Providence : the condition of the Saints on Earth is never so black and cloudy, but some *Rain-bow* appears in the Cloud of Providence. In Psal. 138. 7. *Though I walk in the midst of Trouble, thou wilt revive me.* Every step I take, I tread upon *Thorns*, I walk in the midst of *Trouble*, among *Clouds*, but thou wilt, Lord, *revive me.* *Joseph*, he was in the *Prison*, there was *Darkness* ; but (the Text saies) *the Lord was with Joseph*, there was *Light* ; Gen. 39. 2. *Jacob* had the Hollow of his Thigh put out of joint in *Wrestling* : there was a dark Providence ;

but he saw God's Face at that very time, and there the Lord blessed him: here was *Light* arising to him, *Gen. 32. 30.* Job lost all that ever he had, he was *Rough-cast* with Boils and Sores; there was a dark Providence: Ay but hereby, *Job's* Grace was proved, and improved, and God gave him an honourable testimony, *That he was upright*; and God gave him double the *Estate* that ever he had before: here was *Light* arising to him in his *Darkness*, *Job 42. 10.* And thus God does mix *Light* with his Peoples *Darkness*. As in the Ark there was *Manna* laid up with the *Rod*; so 'tis in God's Providences to his People: with the *Rod* of *Affliction*, there's some *Manna*, some *Light*, some *Comfort* that God causes to spring up: *Manna* with the *Rod*. O the goodnels of God! who would not serve this God? in the *darkest Night* that is, he keeps alive some *sparks of Light* in the Hearts of his People, which may suppress their *Murmuring*, and may minister matter of *Thanksgiving*. That's the first Inference.

*Infe-*

*Inference 2.*

2. If it be God's work and design to cause *Light* and *Comfort* to arise to the *Righteous* : why then, how *contrary* do they act to God, whose work it is to cause *Darkness* and *Sorrow* to the *Righteous* ? God's design and theirs cross each other. There is a *Woe* belongs to them that *make the Hearts of the Righteous sad*, In Ezek. 13. 22. God is creating *Light* for his People, and the *Enemies* of the Church, they are laying *snare*s for them ; God he is pouring *Wine* and *Oil* into his Peoples Wounds, and the *Enemies* of Sion, they are pouring *Vinegar* into the Wounds ; how *contrary* do these act to God ? the Children of *Romish Babylon*, they are at this day plotting the Ruine of God's People : they would turn the Church of God into an *Aceldama*, a *Field of Blood*. The Lord, he makes *Light* to arise to the Godly, and the Wicked, they labour to make *Darkness* and *Sorrow* arise to them. But, such as lay *snare*s for the *Righteous*, God will *rain snare*s upon

upon them: Psal. 11. 6. *Upon the wicked he shall rain snares, Fire and Brimstone.* The Wicked Enemies of the Church, they strike at Christ through his *Members Sides*; and let them know that 'tis kicking against a Rock. Christ will be too hard for all his Enemies; he will be victorious at last: the Enemies, they may bid defiance to Heaven, they may set up their *Standards* against Heaven: but God always comes off Conqueror, and sets up his *Trophies*. If there be either *Justice* in Heaven, or *Fire* in Hell, the Enemy shall not go unpunished. Psal. 11. 13. *He hath ordained his Arrows against the Persecutors.* God has his Arrow upon the String to shoot at Persecutors, and be assured God never misseth his mark. *Dioclesian* raised down the Christians Temples, and burnt their Bibles: but God was avenged on him; he was afterwards stricken with Phrency, and poisoned himself. Persecutors never thrive upon that bloody Trade.



*Inference* 3.

See here the Great *Difference* between the *Wicked* and the *Godly*; there's a vast *Difference*; The *Godly* in all their *Darkness* that befalls them, they have some *Light* arising to them; the *Wicked* in all their outward *Comforts*, they have some *Darkness* arising to them; in the midst of all their *Jollity* and *mirth*, why still there's a *Dark Cloud* hangs over them: *Conscience* chides them, *Scripture* threatens them, (which is like the *Hand-writing upon the Wall*;) In *Psal.* 68. 21. *God shall wound the Head of his Enemies, and the hairy scalp of such a one as goeth on still in his Trespases.* A sinner still, in all his lightsome condition, his outward *Mirth*, his *Joy*, he may see some *Clouds of Darkness*: *God's Threatnings* are against him: *God's Curse* hangs over him, and that *Curse* it blasts wherever it comes. A wicked man, an impenitent hardened sinner, he goes every day in fear of *Arresting*; *Death* may *Arrest* him. There remains nothing for him, but *opere de se in se*: A fearful looking for of *Judgment*, and fiery

fiery indignation, as the Apostle saies, in *Heb. 10. 27.* A hardned impenitent sinner is in an ill case; if he dies, he drops into the *Grave* and into *Hell* both at once. God is brewing for him a *Deadly Cup*. In *Psal. 75. 8.* *In the hand of the Lord there is a Cup, and the Wine is Red: it is full of mixture, and he poureth out the same: but the Dregs thereof all the Wicked of the Earth shall wring them out, and drink them.*

What's this *Red Wine* in the *Cup*? 'Tis nothing else but the *Fiery Wrath of God*: that's the *Red Wine*; *Wine burnt with his Wrath*. And (the Text saies) this *Cup* is full of mixture, it's a *mixed Cup* the sinner must drink. What's the *mixed Cup*? The *Worm of Conscience*, and the *Fire of Hell*: here's a *mixed cup*; and the wicked shall be ever drinking of this *Cup*: God will never say, *Transseat---* *Let this Cup pass away from the Damned*: No, they must be ever drinking the dregs of this *Cup of Wrath*.

Methinks this Scripture should be a *Cooling Card* unto all wicked men, and damp all their *Mirth and Jollity*: *Doomsday-Darkness* is coming upon them. It was sad news brought to *Saul* (and no wonder when the *Devil* brought the

the news ! ) In the 1 Sam. 28. 19. saies Satan there in Samuel's Mantle; to Saul, *To morrow shalt thou be with me.* O dreadful news, to take up a mans Quarters among the Damned! To day a sinner is among his *Cups*, he is *Sporting* with his *Lusts* : now he is in his *Mirth* : and perhaps to morrow he may be with the *Devil* and his *Angels*, where Saul is.

#### Inference 4.

The fourth Inference is this: Does God cause *Light* to spring up to the Upright in all their *Darknes*? Why then see from hence the difference between *Earth* and *Heaven*. Here in this *World* there's a *Mixture* of *Darkness* and *Light* : there's *Clouds* mixt with their *Stars* : *Dark Providences* as well as *Light*.

But now, in *Heaven* it is otherwise, there's no *Darkness* there : nothing but pure *Light*, pure *Bliss* : and therefore *Heaven* it is call'd an *Inheritance in Light*, Col. 1. 12.

The Philosopher saies, *lucis est natura* : *Light* is the most glorious Creature, 'tis the Beauty of the *World*. What were the *World* without

D

Light,

*Light*, but a *Dark Prison*? Here's the Beauty of Heaven, 'tis an *Inheritance in Light*. Heaven it is a *Diaphanum*, or a *bright-Body*, all over embroidered with *Light and Glory*: There are no *Eclipses* there; There are no dark shadows to be seen, but all is *Orient Brightness, Celestial Glory*.

In Heaven, *Christ, the Son of Righteousness*, will alwayes be shining with his illustrious Beams: In *Rev. 21. 23. The Lamb is the Light thereof*. O how should we long to be in that blessed place, that *Paradise of God*, that is so Adorned with the bright illustrious Rays of *Celestial Glory*! There's nothing but pure *Light*, nothing but *Glory* shining in its perfection.

So much for the first *Use*.

*Use 2.*

The second *Use* is of *Consolation* for the Church and People of God. This Text is a *Pillar of Light*, a *Breast of Consolation*, *Unto the Upright there ariseth Light in the Darknes*. Does God make *Light*, and *Joy*, and *Peace*, to arise

arise to the Righteous? Why then should we despond, or throw away our Anchor? Why should we despair? Why may we not hope that the *Morning-Star* of *Deliverance* and *Mercy* may yet appear unto this Island? Why (I say) should we despond, when 'tis God's great Project and Design, to *lighten* his Peoples *Darkness*?

I confess, things have a bad *Aspect*, a dark *Face* at present, *Gray hairs* are here and there. My Brethren, we see how things go: *Sin* grows higher: *Enemies* grow bolder: *Divisions* grow wider. These are bad Symptoms of a dying Patient.

*England* is like that *Ship* in the Gospel, which was almost covered over with *Waves*. Here's that may humble us, and set our Eyes abroad with *Tears*.

Yet, that we may not mourn without hope, let me tell you, there are some *sparks of Light*, that do seem to arise to us in the *Dark*. Unto the *Upright* there *ariseth Light* in the *Darkness*. Let me come as a *Dove* with an *Olive-branch* of *Peace* in my mouth, that that is some spark of *Light* to us.

Grounds  
of Hope  
for Eng-  
land.

That there are many Upright ones in this Nation : That's a Spark of Light. The Text saies, *Light ariseth to the Upright* : 'Tis to be hoped there are many such in this Island, Were the Godly removed, ( as 'tis the design of some to destroy them : ) God would make Quick work with the Nation, he would soon break up *House* here, God would quickly sink the Ship of Church and State, if he had not some of his Elect in it. But for the sake of those that are Upright, God may be pleased yet a while to Reprieve the Nation, and Adjourn *Englands* Funeral a while longer. In *Isa*. 65. 8. *As the new Wine is found in the Cluster, and one saith, Destroy it not, for a Blessing is in it : So will I do for my Servants sakes, that I may not destroy them all.* Though it cannot be denied, but our Vine, in this Land planted, bears much very bad fruit, yet doubtless there are some good Clusters in the Vine, and for these God may spare the Vine, and say, *Is it ere not a blessing in it?*

The Saints of God stay his Hand when he is going to strike. In *Gen*. 19. 22. *Haste thee*

( saies

(saies the Angel to Lot, Hasten thee to Zoar)  
escape thither; for I cannot do any thing till thou be  
come thither. q. d. Thou holdest my hand, I

cannot strike till thou art gone. The Saints of  
God, though others look upon them with a  
contemptible eye, they are the Safety of the  
Land, God will do much for their sakes. The  
Upright, they are the Excellent of the Earth, Psal.

16. 3. Others are but the Lumber, God  
knows bad Lumber: These are the Jewels. Mal.

3. 17.

The Saints of God, they are the Chariots and  
Horsmen of Israel: They are the very Flower  
and Cream of the Creation; they are the Glory  
of Christ, 2 Cor. 8. 23. And for their sakes  
God may yet cause Light to arise, and he may  
be propitious, and his Arm may bring Sal-  
vation.

2. Another Spark of Light arising in Eng-  
land's Darkness is this, That yet God is pleased  
wonderfully to keep up in his People a Spirit  
of Prayer; They cry mightily: Certainly  
God will not say to us, Seek ye me in vain.

The Spartans Walls were their Spears. The  
Wall

Wall and Bullwark of a Land is Devout Prayer. Whole Vollies of Sighs and Groans are every day sent up to Heaven for Mercy; here's a Spark of *Light* in our *Darkness* : God hears these Sighs.

Pray observe, when the Lord intends to pour out the Vial of his Indignation, and to bring wrath upon a People, he presently stops all the sluices of Prayer, no more Prayer to be made. In *Jer.* 7. 16. *Pray not for this People.* God has not said so yet concerning *England*. Prayer is a powerful Orator for Mercy, and may cause *Light* to spring up yet. The Key of Prayer, oyled with Tears, and turn'd with the Hand of Faith, unlocks God's Bowels. Prayer, when 'tis importunate, it staves off Wrath from a Land. In *Exod.* 32. 10. Saies God to *Moses*, *Let me alone, that my Wrath may wax hot against them.* Why, what did *Moses* do? He only Prayed. *Fervent Prayer* it overcomes the Omnipotent, as *Luther* saies. Prayer it finds God Free, but it leaves him Bound. *Hac Domina Mundi fructuat Solum.*---

Prayer ties God's Hands: It staves off Judgment. This (my Brethren) lets in some dawning  
ing



ing of *Light* to this *Land* this day, in the mid'st of all our *Clouds of Obscurity*: Prayer is made for the Church. This gives us some ground to hope, that God will not wholly leave us.

Especially when we consider, Christ is our Advocate; He prays over our Prayers again, sprinkles them with his Blood, and perfumes them with his blessed Odours: and so they go up to Heaven as sweet Incense. In Rev. 8. 4. *The smoke of the Incense which came with the Prayers of the Saints, ascended up before God, out of the Angels hand.*

3. And lastly, Another spark of *Light* arising in our *Dark Hemisphere*, it is this, God's Compassions, his Bowel-Mercies. Mercy, it is God's Darling Attribute, that he loves most of all to magnifie: *Mercy pleaseth him*, Micah 7. 18. Though *We* don't please God, yet *Mercy* pleases him.

*Justice* is God's *strange Work*, Isa. 28. 21. He is not so much used to that: But *Mercy* it is his *proper Work*; it flows *naturally* from him, as the *Honey* from the *Bee*, or as the *Myrrhe* drops

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drops from the Myrrhe-tree. While God so delights in this Darling Attribute of Mercy, why should we despair? Why may not Mercy give the casting Voice for this Nation? In *Isa. 63. 9.* *In his Love and in his Pity he Redeemed them.* O! Love and Pity will do great things. --- *In his Love and in his Pity he Redeemed them.*

God's Mercy 'tis not only *Free*, sending out Pardons where it pleases; but here's the Comfort, God's Mercy can as well *Heal* as it can *Save*: 'Tis a *Healing* Mercy. In *Hosea 14. 4.* *I will heal their Backslidings.*

Pray observe: Mercy, what can't it do? it can *reclaim* the *Stubborn*: it can *soften* the *Impenitent*: it can *bring back* those that are *gone a-stray* from God. God's Mercy, it can as well give *Repentance* to a Nation as *Deliverance*; Mercy can *destroy* the *Sins* of the Nation, and yet *save* the Nation. 'Tis a *Healing* Mercy: --- *I will heal their Backslidings.*

Why, these are then some *Dawnings*, some *Sparks of Light*, that God causes to arise in the midst of all our *Darkness*.

Quest.

## Quest.

But here's a Question, (and so I hasten to an end.) *You will say unto me, But things they still look very bad and dark, and we would have more Light; now what must we do, how must we carry our selves, till God makes Light to arise to us in our Darknes? till Mercy comes riding to England in the Chariot of Salvation?*

## Answ.

I answer in these two or three things: —

1. In this time of our *Darknes* and *Cloudiness*, the first thing we do, let us go into our Chambers. In Isa. 26. 20. *Come, my People, enter thou into thy Chambers, and shut thy doors about thee: hide thy self.*

There are two *Chambers* that we must now go into: —

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1. The

- { 1. The Chambers of our *Hearts*.
- { 2. The Chambers of the *Promises*.

*First*, Let us go in this time of *Darkness* into the *Chambers* of our *Hearts*, by serious *Meditation*, and *Self-examination*. Let us in the first place search our *Evidences* for *Heaven*, cast up our *Accounts*, see how the case stands between God and our *Souls*. Let's bring our *Graces* to the *Touch-Stone*: What *Faith* have we? are we hid by *Faith* in the bleeding *Wounds* of *Christ*? What *Love* to God have we? does *Conscience* witness that we not only *serve* him, but *love* him? Our *Heart* and *Flesh* cry out for the *Living God*? Are we carried every day up to *Heaven* in a fiery *Chariot* of *Love*? Is it thus with us? O let us enter into these *Chambers* of our *Hearts*, set our *House* in order, our *Souls*: that's our great work now. My Beloved, when things are dark without, we had need have all clear within, to have *Conscience* smile.

*Secondly*,

Secondly, Let us go into the *Chambers* of God's *Promises*, and there let's a while hide our selves, during this black *Cloud* of Providence. O the *sweet Promises* of God, where our Souls may take Sanctuary! God has promised *Comfort* to all his *Mourners*, *Matth. 5. 4.* God has promised that he will *strengthen* the *infirm*; *Isa 40. 29.* *to them that have no might, he increaseth Strength.* God has promised a *Crown of Glory* to the *Conqueror*, *Rev. 2. 10.* He has given it under Hand and Seal, *he will never leave us, nor forsake us.* *Heb. 13. 5.*

O my Brethren, here's our Wisdom: let us now by Faith go and hide our selves, in the *Chambers* of these *Divine Promises*.

And that's the first thing we must do in this *Dark Hour*: *Go into our Chambers.*

2. Having done this, if you ask me yet further, what we must do in this time of *Darkness*, till God makes *Light* spring up to us? I answer: having got into our *Chambers*, let us

Commit our selves and our Cause to God, that he would safe-guard and keep us. And this I ground upon that Scripture, in Plal. 37. 5. *Commit thy way unto the Lord; he will bring it to pass.* In the Hebrew it is *Roll thy way upon the Lord.* This is now our work: Even as the *Client* commits himself and his Cause to his *Counsel* that he imployes, to plead for him: or as the *Orphan* commits himself unto the Care and Tutilage of his *Guardian*; so should we commit our selves to God, and devolve all our cares upon him. --- *Commit thy way unto the Lord.* Let us do our Duty, and trust God with our Safety. Brethren, it is our work to *cast Care*: it is God's work to *take Care*.

3. In this time of *Darkness*, having got in- to our *Chambers*, and committed our selves unto God; let us now patiently *wait God's time*, till he shall make a *Light* to arise in our *Horizon*: wait on God, till he turns our *Darkness* into the *Light of the Morning*. God can on a sudden, with a word of his Mouth, scatter and disperse the blackest Clouds that do appear; God can *create Light*. God can strike a *streight stroke*

*stroke with a crooked Instrument : He can bring Good out of Evil: God can deliver his People by means unthought of: nay, he can deliver them that very way that they think he will destroy them in. Who would ever have thought that God should have made a (aus) way for his People to have marched through on, in the midst of the Sea? that God should have made Heaven a Grainary, to drop down Manna for his People to feed on? O wait till Light spring up. God he can make use of the Enemy to do his Work: he can play his Game by his Enemies hand. In short: God is able to remove the Mountains that lie in our way, or else (if he please) he can leap over the Mountains: In Cant. 2. 8. He cometh leaping upon the Mountains. Therefore, my Brethren, till Light spring up, let us wait with Patience: Light will arise unto the Upright.*

My Brethren, I will say but this: The Mercies we pray for, and are in expectation of, they are worth waiting for. To see the Golden Fleet of Prayer come home laden with large and rich returns of Mercy: to see the

Lilly.

Lilly and the Rose united, Truth and Peace :  
 To see Popery abandoned, and not one Stone  
 left upon another : To see Prophaneness dis-  
 countenanced and disgraced : to see the Beauty of  
 Holiness shine forth in our Hemisphere : To see  
 Jesus Christ ride in Triumph in the Chariot of his  
 Gospel : To see the Righteous had in Honour and  
 Renown, and be like the Wings of a Dove covered  
 with Silver ; Surely these are Mercies so emi-  
 nent, that they are well worth waiting for.

And therefore, let not Patience be out of  
 breath. Having got into your Chambers, and  
 committed your Cause to God, now get into a  
 waiting posture : wait till some Light spring  
 up to God's Church. I will shut up all with  
 one Scripture, (which may encourage hum-  
 ble waiting : ) In Isa. 30. 18. The Lord is a  
 God of Judgment ; Blessed are all they that wait  
 for him.

F I N I S.



